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AUTHOR	Comer, James P.
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ABSTRACT

The present discussion develops the thesis that social and economic changes since the 1940s have produced educational problems requiring a new approach to school management. First, a brief overview is provided of social and economic changes prior to and after the 1940s, showing how such changes have affected the daily experience of individuals and the responsibilities of the schools. This is followed by a description of efforts by educators to aid underachieving children, including compensatory education and school improvement programs. Next, an ecological perspective on the school is offered, focusing on work done in conjunction with the Yale Child Study Center at two public elementary schools located in New Haven, Connecticut (99% black, with more than 50% receiving Aid for Families with Dependent Children assistance). After a brief review of basic concepts of system management, interventions in the two inner-city schools are described in terms of structural, procedural, and time-related program elements. In the interventions, priority was given to the development of a governance and management body consisting of administrators, teachers, parents, aides, and support staff. This body functioned at the highest decision-making level in the schools. The document concludes with a discussion of the relationship between management and school improvement, emphasizing the importance of good management practices and school staff members' knowledge of them. (RH)

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Societal Change: Implications for School Management

by

James P. Comer, M.D., M.P.H.

Thomas Jefferson said that education is essential in a democracy and necessary to improve the quality of the human condition. He wrote, "If a nation expects to be ignorant and free. . ., it expects what never was and never will be." . . . "In the present spirit of extending to the great mass of mankind the blessing of instruction, I see a prospect of great advancement in the happiness of the human race."[1] Education has been particularly important in a nation as heterogeneous and dynamic as ours. In fact, it contributed heavily to our national dynamism.

Education promoted significant advances in science and technology in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, which, in turn, accelerated the speed of social interaction and changed the nature of the skills necessary to participate successfully in our society. Concomitantly it gave many people the necessary knowledge, skill and credentials to be successful. Nonetheless, formal education--the public school--always failed many people. But only within the last thirty years or so has school failure or marginal success become a serious handicap to individuals, a threat to democracy and the quality of American life.[2]

The pre 1900's American economy was relatively simple. Jobs were, more often than not, available for the unschooled or school dropouts. And even though many people had trouble meeting essential needs, survival was generally possible without an elaborate and impersonal bureaucratic support

system. Heads of households were able to care for their families and experience the associated sense of social and psychological well being and power.

In addition, pre-1940 America was a nation of small towns and rural areas. Even cities functioned as a collection of small towns. Small town conditions and attitudes existed at every level of government and business. Travel was slow and difficult and there was relatively little movement in and out of these areas. Television was still in the laboratories until the 1940's. Most information about the world was filtered through, and censured by, local leaders--parents, teachers, principals, labor representatives, employers, ministers, politicians--or information sources such as local newspapers, schools, and libraries.

With limited contact with the outside, local authority figures were the makers of "truth," spoke with almost a "common tongue" about expected behavior, meted out jobs, justice and injustice and met the spiritual, psychological and social needs of community members. Although the rules that governed relationships were often unjust, there was intimate interaction among institutional authority figures, and thus, relatively clear expectations and few behavior options and choices.

Recreation and social life--church, club, community organizations--was largely based in family and social networks. Thus, most families--adults and children--worked, played, found spiritual and social expression and support among acquaintences, and most often, among kin and friend in local settings. Yet individuals were tied emotionally to the larger social system through their respective economic, political, religious and social leaders.

The economic and social conditions of the pre-1940's period promoted an individual sense of personal worth, value and belonging to the larger social system for most Americans. This minimized the existence of feelings of exclusion, anger, and alienation among most; created individual desires to contribute as responsible citizens. Also under economic and social conditions of the past a great deal of social skill was not necessary to be able to function at home, in school or in the larger society.

Profound scientific and technological changes moved us from a horse and buggy era to a car, airplane, jet and rocket age level of technology in about seventy years. Scientific and technological developments promoted metropolitan living, high mobility, massive, rapid and visual communication of information. As a result it is now possible to have breakfast in New York City and lunch the same day in San Francisco. We are now a nation of people in daily contact with strangers. Television now brings sound and visual communication of events, attitudes and values from around the world into our homes. No longer are a few local leaders the holders of all "truth." The "common tongue" or general agreement among leaders no longer exists. It is possible to hear sharp differences of opinion expressed about the most basic issues almost every half hour over radio and television newscasts.[3]

In addition, our economy is no longer a simple one. Basic survival needs cannot be scratched from the ground, forests, rivers, lakes and streams. Food, clothing and shelter come to us through complex production, marketing and distribution systems. Because of the complexity of the economy, sustained unemployment can exist side by side with highly visible affluence for most, wealth and power for some. Sustained unemployment denies parents the opportunity to meet the food, clothing and shelter needs of their children

as well as to experience a sense of adequacy, belonging and worth which being able to do so provides. This increases the likelihood of family problems and decreases the chances of many children to be adequately prepared for school. Current economic and social conditions promote dysfunctional levels of anger, distrust and alienation within individuals, among and between groups.

At the same time, scientific and technological miracles and social movements have raised the hopes and expectations of almost all people. But functioning on a job in order to realize the high level of expectations many people hold today requires the highest level of social and psychological development ever needed. An impulsive or poorly organized traffic controller is intolerable. Such a person might have fared well in the past as a fisherman or farmer, disappearing occupations.[4]

Thus, full human development--academic, social and psychological--is no longer simply desirable. It is a necessity if individuals are to function well and, conversely, if the quality of life in our society is to be improved. Whether it is fair or not, the society has charged the school with the responsibility for helping all children meet the demands of a more complex age, and helping children who would have dropped out of school in the past to stay and acquire the knowledge and skills needed for success on a job, in a family and as a citizen of our society and world.

Families and groups under the most social stress in the past--most often Blacks, Hispanics, Native Americans and some Asians--have the greatest difficulty promoting the level of social, psychological and, in turn, academic development that children will need to function well in the world of today and tomorrow.[5] Efforts to adequately develop these children have been the focus of much educator attention for over a quarter of a century now.

Compensatory Education to School Improvement

In the 1950's and 60's many educators began to realize that children who were once dropping out of school, obtaining employment, caring for their families and functioning reasonably well without an education were going to have less chance to do so in the future. This realization spawned a number of programs designed to compensate for the school underachievement of many children who appeared otherwise intellectually able.

The explanation for the difficulty of these children re-activated an old debate which continues today. On the one side some social, behavior and biological scientists argue that underachieving students in most schools, for the most part, are not intellectually able.[6,7,8] On the other side, a like and majority group of scientists argue that such children are culturally deprived, economically and socially disadvantaged, mal and under-developed.[9,10,11,12] Such children have been described as impulsive, non-verbal, suspicious and withholding, undermotivated and so on. In short, the labels and problems suggest a deficit in the child, his or her family, neighborhood, reference group or culture.[13] But it is believed that these problems can be overcome. Obviously those who hold that underachievement is on a genetic basis are suggesting that compensatory efforts are not possible, sometimes arguing that they are ill advised, wasteful and detrimental.

Despite the public perception that compensatory education efforts have failed, there is solid evidence that many such programs have been successful.[14,15,16] Yet it is true that many children continue to underachieve in school and the quality of public school education continued to deteriorate broadly, particularly in areas serving large numbers of children from low-income,

more often minority communities.[17] This is due, in part, to the fact that the compensatory education methods and movement have not greatly altered the perceptions and practices of traditional schools. Student gains made in innovative pre-school and early elementary compensatory education programs often "wash out" by third grade in traditional and/or poorly functioning schools.[18]

In addition, some observers initially disagreed with the notion that the causes of school underachievement were lodged primarily in children, their families, neighbors, reference groups and/or culture. These observers believe that the major causes of student underachievement are the attitudes, expectations and methods of an underachieveing school staff and school system. Research has shown that numerous schools serving low-income children are successful.[19,20,21,22] The successful schools tend to have the following features:

1. Strong instructional leadership
2. High expectations
3. A safe and orderly environment
4. Frequent monitoring of pupil progress
5. A clearly articulated mission of the school
6. Opportunities to learn because of adequate time on tasks
7. Home-school support systems

The evidence that certain conditions lead to successful schools in low-income communities has led to the development of a School Improvement Movement. Here the emphasis is on staff development--administration, teaching, curriculum. Such programs are often developed without carefully considering the time, structural and process elements needed to effect successful change. Most

schools still have an authoritarian, top-down, service delivery approach and governance mechanism.[23] Such an approach and operation is consistent with our societal attitudes and ways and a part of the developmental experience and formal education of most educators. In addition, school staff--administrators and teachers--often perceive school improvement efforts as a shift of the blame for underachievement in school from the children and their families (or the social conditions adversely impacting them) to themselves. All of these factors contribute to system rigidity and maintenance of the status quo.

Such schools will not be changed by executive decree, new research findings, consumer (student, parent, community) desire or need for change and often even staff desire for school improvement or change. In order to successfully effect change in resistant systems it is necessary for the leadership and/or management group to have a perspective which views the school as a social system of multiple interacting forces--children, parents, teachers, administrators, curricula, attitudes, etc.--all of which are a part of the problem and all of which are a part of the solution. Change effort must take individual, group (unions, parents, administrators, etc.) and bureaucratic resistance factors into account; respond to them at a rate and with structures and processes which will gradually promote trust, an improved relationship climate and gradually overcome resistance. Perfectly good ideas and methods applied too quickly, too slowly and without adequate trust and support can fail. Each failure makes school improvement more difficult to achieve the next time an effort is launched.

An Ecological Perspective

A system is designed as an orderly but dynamic arrangement of parts which make up a functioning whole qualitatively different from each part. A system is also a subsystem of a larger system and at the same time is composed of several interacting subsystems, all interdependent. Ecology refers to the interaction and interdependence of components in a system.[24]

A school is a social and/or ecological system. Multiple and complex interactions take place between and among all of the participants in the system--parent, student, professional teaching and administrative staff, other professional support staff, non-professional school staff. Each school belongs to larger but still sub-units of the total system such as neighborhood, racial, religious and other significant reference groups, with their attendant members and/or the local school system. Each school system is a sub-system or co-system of other impactful systems--business and finance, politics, communications, public services and others at the local, state or regional and national levels.

Attitudes and/or climate, action and/or behavior and practices anyplace in the constellation of systems--past, present, future--planned and unplanned --can affect the life of a child in school. Adverse economic, racial, religious or other social conditions in systems outside of the school can negatively affect the social, psychological and intellectual development of children; the training, attitudes and behavior of school staff. Nonetheless, a school is a relatively autonomous system and it is possible for a particular school leader or leadership group to manage it in a way to minimize the impact of social forces beyond the school and promote adequate teaching and learning in the school.

The quality of system--in this case, school--management is perhaps more important than the ability of individual teachers, the curriculum and teaching techniques. Management must effect the quality of relationships between home and school, among school staff and between staff and students in a way and at a level which can minimize conflict, permits and promotes satisfactory social-psycho-emotional and academic learning and growth among students. Based on my more than twelve years of work in the public schools of New Haven, Connecticut I would estimate that 50-60% of what most school staff call behavior and learning problems are the direct and indirect consequences of systems management problems.

I will discuss our work in New Haven as a model of management problems, needs and possibilities but before doing so I would like to briefly review the basic concepts of systems management so that their application in our work will be clearly apparent.

There are a number of systems approaches but in practice most managers must use an operational or ecclectic approach. The manager must evaluate the managerial situation a system presents and apply theory, knowledge and information from a variety of sources to achieve the best possible result. Management must bring individual and group goals in harmony to the degree necessary to achieve the designated task; find and utilize the most efficient and effective goal achievement techniques; mediate individual conflicts which retard or preclude goal achievement. This process involves organizing, planning, coordinating and controlling. Most importantly, the manager must be sensitive to system timing, structure and process needs and be able to apply such knowledge and sensitivity in carrying out management functions.[25]

An important question remains unanswered. Why is the modern school so complex and in need of such sophisticated management theory, knowledge and application methods? In the school of the past most principals managed sternly and largely without paying much attention, except sometimes intuitively, to the above principles and processes.

The answer, again, is in the nature of the massive scientific, technological and consequential social changes which have occurred since the 1900's and have been felt most keenly since the 1940's. In the past the school principal and staff were an intimate and highly respected part of the social network of most families. As a result, school staff authority was an extension of parental authority. Today, because of high mobility and mass communication, school staff are sometimes strangers and foreign bodies, even "enemies" in the neighbornood--subject to distrust, rejection and attack. The modern school manager must systematically create the goal, strategy and method consensus which existed in a natural way in the school of the past. This requires greater management knowledge and skill than was needed in the past.

King and Brennan Models

The King and Brennan schools are ninety-nine percent black, K-4 elementary schools in the inner city of New Haven. More than fifty percent of the children in both schools receive Aid for Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) assistance. Brennan serves students largely from a nearby low-income housing project. Both schools have had a population range of 250 to 400 over the project years, now approximately 300 in King and 200 in Brennan due to recent redistricting and low-income housing policy changes.

In 1968, the initial project year, the King School students were approximately nineteen and eighteen months behind in reading and math by the fourth grade, dropping more each year. Serious behavior and attendance problems plagued the school. In 1980, despite continued neighborhood deterioration, students are two months below grade level in reading and math on the Iowa Test of Basic Skills. King students have been among the top five of the thirty elementary schools in the city in the last six years and there have been no serious behavior problems in six or seven years.

The principles developed in King School were field-tested in Brennan, beginning in the 1977-78 academic year. While Brennan had serious behavior, morale, and achievement problems, it had had an effective principal for eight years prior to instituting the project and thus less staff turnover and open conflict. Nonetheless, there was serious underachievement in grades three and four. Significant gains were made in reading and math in all but second grade by May 1980. Spectacular gains were registered in kindergarten and first grade, significant at the .001 level on the Metropolitan Readiness Test, McCarthy Scales of Children's Abilities, the Woodcock Reading Mastery Test and the Iowa Test of Basic Skills, after a kindergarten enrichment program and an in-service staff development reading program. Improved school climate reduced student behavior problems and greatly improved attendance.

The specific interventions are multifaceted and complex. A synopsis outlining the structural, process and timing elements of the program is as follows:

A representative (administrator, parents, teachers, aides, mental health team) governance and management body plan, organize, coordinate and evaluate the social and academic programs designed to improve student and staff performance. This effort is supplemented by a parent group working in support of the school program. A mental health team, represented operationally by a social worker, helps both groups function and develop programs sensitive to child development, relationship and systems knowledge. In this process all involved arrive at a more or less consensus about goals, strategies and methods. These arrangements and efforts improve the school climate. This frees student, staff and parent energy from interactional conflict and allows it to be applied to staff and curriculum development. In-service efforts are tailored to developmental needs of the staff and the curriculum. As staff and curriculum development proceed, the curriculum is tailored to the specific needs of the school. Social and academic achievement levels gradually and steadily rise as a result.

The program managers--New Haven School System director and principal and Yale Child Study Center directors--initially created four structures to bring about the kind of program and outcomes described. They are as follows:

1. A representative governance and management body within each school.
2. A parent participation program.
3. A mental health team and/or program.
4. The staff and curriculum development program.

Management created these structures largely on the basis of theory and knowledge about children, teaching, systems behavior and history.

The structures and their functions were based on several key assumptions:

1. No single group--students, teachers, administrators, parents, aides--is responsible for school and student underachievement.
2. Students and staff are capable of performance at an adequate level regardless of their backgrounds.
3. Successful school programs can take place in spite of family and social system problems; school-staff efforts should focus on in-school issues and conditions primarily.
4. All participants in the school endeavor would like to be successful; maladaptive behavior is reactive and/or defensive.
5. The major problem in schools is systems complexity precluding the development of necessary problem-solving and opportunity-exploiting mechanisms and behavior.
6. Distrust and alienation made possible through increased physical, social and psychological distance among program participants contribute heavily to dysfunctional operation of schools.
7. A governance and management mechanism which facilitates communication, a reduction of social and psychological distance and permits problem-solving and opportunity-exploiting activities is indicated.

A representative governance and management body (School Advisory Committee in one school and a Parent-Teacher Action Group in the other) was created to give representation to all of the parties involved in the education process and to recreate the sense of community and trust that existed in the pre-1940's school. The parent participation program was designed to address the same issue.

The mental health team was created to help the staff and parents improve their interactions between and among themselves and with the children. The teaching and curriculum program was designed to address academic improvement issues.

These initial program structures were modified and given appropriate emphasis and support on the basis of an operational assessment, particularly during the first year and at significant stages in program development, but on an ongoing basis as well.

The first-year operational assessment of the management situation at King School revealed complex and dysfunctional interactions which had to be addressed before school improvement could take place. There was serious alienation and distrust between parents, the community and the school. The low-income, largely black parents often felt that the teachers, predominantly white and middle-income, did not really care about their children. Teacher efforts to bring about classroom and general school order were often criticized by parents, in several cases severely and in disruptive--even potentially dangerous--ways. Initially only a very small number of parents could be involved in collaborative efforts such as serving on the steering committee or in the parent-participation groups. When parents did participate it was generally around a crisis and they were more often angry and adversarial than cooperative and supportive.

During the first year at King the staff was made up of a large number of young, white teachers who were very committed to trying to improve the education of inner-city children. But they were also very committed to open

education, then being hailed as an important change in teaching. The teachers had too little overall teaching experience to be able to successfully handle the new method. This contributed to serious student behavior problems and staff-student conflict. The parents were very traditional in their attitudes, values, and expectations in education. The personal style of the parents and many teachers was quite different, the former more conservative. All of these conditions contributed to parent-teacher conflict.

Many of the students possessed skills which contributed to success on the playground, in the housing projects and elsewhere outside a school but did not contribute to success in school. Too many were impulsive and unable to sit and listen to instruction, take in information, reflect on it, generalize and use it to solve intellectual problems. Many lacked social tolerance and would tend to fight out problems rather than talk them out.

Too few children had had experience working with pre-school education materials such as crayons, pencils, papers, etc. Too few children had been read to by adults and thus came to school with low pre-reading development levels. While many children had been told and understood that the school was their hope for the future and they were encouraged to participate and perform well by their parents, too many had no real motivation to attend school other than to be with friends. Their goals were different to those of the staff.

While the young staff had some empathy for the underdevelopment and different preparation of the children, most of them did not have a good appreciation of the social, psychological and intellectual implications

of the student behavior they observed. Their college preparation, like that of most teachers, had focused almost exclusively on teaching methods and materials rather than on relationship and school climate issues. The teachers lacked a clear understanding of the importance of and how to create positive relationships in a classroom and in the school. The psychology courses they had received tended to be theoretical rather than applied and dealt with general principles rather than specific applied classroom and child development issues. On one occasion there was a discussion about the fight-or-flight reaction as represented by a frightened child kicking a teacher and running out of the class. Not a single teacher had heard of this elementary and widely known psychological principle.

The support system of these schools--psychologists, social workers, resource teachers, nurses--was fragmented and peripheral to the classroom activities. The school psychologists and social workers preferred to use the psychiatric treatment or medical model and work one-to-one with children and families rather than address classroom and school relationship climate issues. Much social worker time was spent outside the school working on complex problems that could not possibly be managed in the time and with the resources available. Psychologists tested, labeled and sometimes treated children who were, most often, behavior problems but not psychologically ill. The behavior problems more often stemmed from the difficult interactions in the school than from inner psychological conflict. The resources of the social worker, psychologists, resource teachers, aides, and other support personnel were not coordinated. Each spoke a different professional language.

The expectations of the New Haven School System leadership, the Yale Child Study Center leadership, the parents and the teachers were all quite different. The Yale Child Study Center leadership expected to focus on relationships and behavior issues in order to improve the climate of relationship and permit the educational process to take place more efficiently and effectively. The New Haven School System leadership expected a focus on management and academic issues. In addition, at least two of the teachers had leadership ambitions that they had hoped to fulfill in the program and were not receiving an opportunity to do so.

The teaching staff, as mentioned, was interested in trying out new methods. The parents expected immediate improvement in the academic and social performance of their children while the school and Child Study Center staff expected a gradual change. The central school administration had some ambivalence about the program in the first place. Some of the administrators wanted to try, and supported, innovation and others preferred traditional approaches with a strong emphasis on maintaining classroom order.

Differing purposes and goals, student underdevelopment, inappropriate staff preparation, parental discontent and other factors often led to disagreements, tension and conflict. Each program effort--teaching and curriculum development, support or mental health services, parent participation, etc.--was carried out in an atmosphere of suspicion, doubt, without enthusiasm and confidence in students, staff or parents. All participants in the system were chronically fatigued and depressed. Major, even minor, problems often stirred professional, racial, class and other latent tensions. Social and academic growth of the students was not possible.

The temptation and danger in a dysfunctional system such as the above is for the manager to take a "heavy hand" or authoritarian approach in an effort to make the system less dysfunctional. Authoritarian management efforts to make people act in goal-directed ways in such a setting usually meets with resistance and the mobilization of organization (union, parent advocacy, administrator)power to support resistance. Unusually gifted managers can improve system functioning with an authoritarian management approach. They mobilize group trust and support through personal characteristics and, sometimes, because of remarkable expertise. But this approach limits the growth of other potential leadership in the system and makes it dependent upon the manager, thus vulnerable in a change situation. Also, unudually gifted managers are extremely rare.

The operational assessment at King strongly verified the theoretical position that a representative governance and management body was needed. Its development and function was given the highest priority. Management realized that it would not be possible to bring the goals and methods of all the people in the system in line with system goals unless each group had an opportunity to have its interests represented on the planning, organizing, coordinating and controlling mechanism of the school or system.

It is important to point out that after some experimentation, it was agreed that the management body must have real power but must not paralyze the principal; therefore, must be an advisory group. This requires the manager or principal to take the input of group members seriously but to act independently and contrary to the group position when it appears necessary to achieve the goals for which he or she bears final responsibility. The latter situation--independent and contrary action--is rarely necessary.

As administrators, teachers, parents, aides, support staff identified and analyzed problems and opportunities, established priorities, organized, developed, coordinated and evaluated problem-solving activities, a consensus about direction, expectations and methods emerged. Parents and staff--assisted by mental health support staff--came to see each other as persons with common interests and goals. Mutual respect and trust emerged.

Because all the groups participating in the school endeavor were represented at the highest decision-making level, each had a sense of ownership in the program of the school and encouraged the respective members of their groups to participate. In this way the school went from having 15 to 20 parents turn out for school activities to having 300 to 400 turn out for the same kind of activity. Internal communication was improved and troublesome misunderstandings were reduced.

The mental health support staff--largely the social worker--supported and facilitated parent participation and staff acceptance of collaboration; shared child development and child rearing skills with parents, administrators and teachers. This assisted in reducing behavior problems.

In this atmosphere teachers could open their classrooms to each other, acknowledge strengths and weaknesses and began to share strengths (giving demonstrations for parents, assisting younger colleagues, etc.) and accepting help for weaknesses (in-service workshops using experts directed to address staff needs identified by the teachers themselves rather than central office or principal determined weaknesses or needs).

After significant emphasis on staff and curriculum development, an effort was made to tailor the program to the specific needs of the children of King School. This led to the development of the "Social Skills Curriculum for Inner-City Children." Without reducing time on basic skill development, this program integrated the teaching of academic material, the arts and the social skills the children will need to be successful as adults--interpersonal, planning, organizing and coordinating skills needed to participate in politics and government, business, health and nutrition activities, and leisure-spiritual time activities. Programs have included a mayoralty candidates' presentation in the school, classroom stores and banks, human body awareness, gospel chorus, etc.

Note that sufficient time and energy was available to adequately develop the academic and social programs only after the relationship climate of the school was greatly improved. Again, this was made possible because the work of the representative, collaborative governance and management body freed time and energy that would have otherwise been consumed in conflict. The same staff and curriculum development program that did not work in a poorly and inappropriately managed system in the early years worked well in the adequately managed and functioning system later on.

In the field-test school the same collaborative methods were utilized with less Mental Health Team assistance. A Teacher-Coordinator assisted parent participation. Another Teacher-Coordinator facilitated teacher participation in staff and curriculum development. The same systematic effort to improve climate in order to address staff and curriculum development issues took place.

With even less attention to child behavior problems than was given in King, serious acting up and acting out problems decreased in an improved climate of relationships. The Brennan principal credits the presence of parents from the community working as aides in a few classrooms and forming the core of the parent group--an approach devised at King--as being largely responsible for the quick improvement in school climate and behavior. Parents serve as classroom aides only as long as their children are in the school. Again, the relationship problems at Brennan were not as serious as the initial King problem but underachievement was still the case. The quick improvement in the school climate at Brennan made it possible for the staff to quickly address staff and curriculum development issues.

An early concern expressed by the staff was the frequent movement in and out of classrooms for special assistance and enrichment programs for a number of children. Numerous programs--college and community volunteer groups, special arts activities, etc.--were available. Some programs were categorical grant activities, such as Title I teachers in the basic skill areas, targeted for certain groups. It was reasoned that the school day and experience was being fragmented in a way that precluded student gains by the very programs designed to promote them. A subcommittee of the representative governance and management body designed, and the school got official permission to develop, a program to coordinate and fully utilize all of the resources in the school in a way that did not take the children out of the classroom frequently.

All of the resources were identified and their capabilities were catalogued. All of the students in the school were then screened for reading and mathematical strengths and weaknesses and matched with appropriate

resources with minimum to no overlap or waste of resources or time. Prior to mandated mainstreaming of educably mentally retarded children, such children in Brennan and King were placed in regular classrooms--with support --and the EMR space was used by all children needing specific outside-of-classroom assistance. But an effort is made to provide most special assistance in regular classrooms.

The major responsibility for carrying out this operation is held by the Learning Disability Teacher, working with classroom teachers and parents as a subcommittee of the governance and management body, in what is called the Learning Center Program. The progress of children, problems, needs and opportunities are addressed and monitored in the Learning Center on a weekly basis. Social Skill Curriculum proposals and all other academic development efforts in the school are carried out through the Learning Center group.

As mentioned, the Brennan principal had a reasonably orderly school prior to utilizing a representative, collaborative governance and management body. He points out that there are structural and process limitations to managing in isolation as do most principals. In his previous "tight ship" approach he referred each problem to the designated resource person or program. The teacher, support staff, parents and volunteers never got a chance to look at the total picture, share ideas, plan and develop better coordinated approaches to student and staff needs and opportunities. Each felt isolated and frustrated in his or her peripheral support position and the teachers felt undersupported in spite of the existence of numerous support personnel.

As mentioned, other management styles can be used and are successful, with the aforementioned shortcomings, in schools, particularly in private schools, and in systems such as industry, business and the military. But these systems differ in important ways to public schools and suggest the need for collaborative management approach in the latter. Most importantly, it is much more difficult to extrude troublesome students and staff in public schools than any of the other systems. But there is an even more fundamental problem.

Principals or school managers have official and formal authority and related power. But teachers, other staff, parents and children have unofficial and informal power often greater in significance than the official power of the principal. Probably because of the success of democracy and education--and the effect of television and high mobility--few people concede power and authority to principals as most did prior to World War II. As mentioned, when principals and other managers demand respect and acquiescence to their authority without having gone through the process of promoting constructive support for their leadership among groups and individuals in the system, severe resistance often develops. The collaborative, cooperative management approach best promotes the process necessary to enhance principal or manager power without dysfunctional resistance.

It is of interest that Japanese and Scandinavian industrialists in particular, have examined and in some cases utilized manager-worker collaboration approaches. Some American industrialists, concerned about low productivity, are moving in this direction. Indeed there probably is more such movement in industry than in education and other human service delivery organizations.

I must emphasize that the collaborative, governance and management structure, process and timing outlined in these projects did not always work smoothly. Certain efforts did not work at all. Ongoing evaluation enabled us to eliminate unsuccessful approaches and try others. The task is never done and no school is ever perfect. Changes in staff, students, parents; new materials, ideas, insights, school functioning level, morale and experience require constant program adjustments. The existance of a representative governance-management body permits early detection of change needs and provides the system with a flexibility to respond.

In systems as active as King and Brennan it is easy to credit individuals, specific programs, the general climate and the like for overall school improvement. It is easy to forget that the governance and management body acts as a kind of "central nervous system" which makes it all possible. The principal of the King School pointed out that in the early years when things began to go well and everybody was busy, he would occasionally forget to schedule School Advisory Council meetings. In short order there would be communications problems and conflicts. Once the SAC meetings were restored, the problems were reduced or eliminated.

The function of the governance and management body was not only to prevent problems through good planning and program execution but to mediate individual and intergroup conflicts. In both schools the governance and management bodies successfully mediated conflicts related to a city-wide teacher strike, personality clashes, teacher assignment difficulties and

many others. The collaboration method greatly reduced school-community conflict. Working in this way the school acquired a reputation as a friend and member of the community, the kind of relationship that existed naturally prior to the 1950's. As a result there has not been angry and dangerous confrontations between parents and staff since the third year of the program at King.

While I believe that the parent participation program, the Mental Health Team activities and the teaching and curriculum development program are all important, none could work effectively fo long without a governance and management body. For example, research has pointed to the importance of high teacher expectations and school climate in promoting adequate levels of student achievement. But high teacher expectation levels cannot be maintained for long by most people in difficult school climate situations. It is a representative governance and management body--more than a single principal acting alone--that is able to transmit, facilitate and support attitudes, develop problem solving and opportunity exploiting programs, and coordinat teaching and staff support efforts needed to make it possible for teachers to maintain a high level of gratification and, in turn, high expectations.

The initial change from a governance and management structure in which the principal has total management authority and responsibility to one in which other staff have governance and management authority and responsibility requires more time than in the traditional method. Teachers and parents are

reluctant to act and are unsure of themselves. In rare cases some will try to usurp principal power. But as teachers, aides and principals acquire experience and management skills, a principal's task becomes less onerous from a time, energy and task standpoint. The principal becomes more of a facilitator and overseer than controller. Time is freed for the heavy paperwork and building care tasks required in a modern school as well as for program conceptualization.

The Brennan principal is on leave for the 1980-81 academic year. His replacement reports that the staff moved ahead almost as if there was no change. This is the condition which permits continued system growth in spite of leadership changes, less possible when order and achievement is a function of the characteristics of the individual principal or leader. This is the condition which permits the staff to systematically seek out and resolve problems and exploit opportunities rather than defensively respond to crises. It is in such schools that research findings and program innovations can be incorporated, if they are useful, rather than superficially tagged on without having much impact, or distorted and ignored altogether.

Management and School Improvement

The above models clearly show the crucial role of good organization and management. But school organization and management remains almost a "dirty" word. One educator--from a family of highly successful managers in business--suggested that I not use the word management to refer to the role of the principal and other administrators. He said that the word management was suggestive of control, manipulation, exploitation and profit-making. This

is an unfortunate attitude held by far too many individuals in the people helping professions--education, social work, even among some health care professionals. They are suggesting that the empathy, spontaneity, warmth and caring needed to serve people and planning, coordination and control are mutually exclusive. Both sets of conditions are needed.

As shown, the unsystematic application of knowledge and resources in a system can undermine caring. Many educators criticized for not caring about children began their careers with caring attitudes. As the developers of the Yale Child Study Center-New Haven School System program assumed, not caring is an end-product or defensive response to a poorly functioning system. As coaches, officials and rules free athletic teams to achieve order, spontaneity, creativity and goals, so too does school management. Without adequate management—in both cases--chaos is a more likely outcome of group activity than goal achievement.

The consequences of the negative attitude about management is reflective in our training and treatment of school managers. Organization and management programs are not usually strong departments of schools of education. The approach of these departments is more often classroom than practice based. Many programs are arranged so that students take administration training "on the side" because the requirements beyond those in other program areas are minimal, encouraging people with little interest or talent to qualify as administrators and/or managers.

Within school systems administrators are often appointed for political reasons without evidence of talent and often eventually promoted "out of the way" because they didn't have management ability. Unsuccessful teachers

often find a way out of the classroom by becoming an administrator, compounding problems, because all of the organization, planning, relationship skills, teaching knowledge--and more--required to be a good teacher are required to be a good manager.

The modern school requires teacher understanding of school management, its role and impact on their own and system functioning as well as the skill to directly participate in it. Few pre-service education programs provide such understanding or skills. Teaching support staff--social workers, psychologists, learning disability and other special teachers, nurses--should understand the purposes and impact of school planning, communication, coordination, evaluation (management) and be prepared to participate in it. Most are not. Administrators, teachers and support staff should understand and be able to promote positive home-school relationships, a management function. Most are not systematically trained to do so.

Not only is public education an important mechanism to advance the happiness of the human race and undergird democracy, as indicated by Thomas Jefferson, it is also an important, big business. School managers should be carefully selected on the basis of demonstrated ability and potential, carefully trained, supervised and assisted on the job as is the case in successful profit and non-profit making organizations.

But a school is not a profit making organization producing inanimate objects. It is charged with one of the most important responsibilities in the society--to enhance the social, psychological and intellectual

development of the nation's young. Professional and nonprofessional adults involved in schools must be able to work together in a way to create a climate which nurtures the young and promotes such development. Relationships and feelings are more important in a system with a human nurturance and development responsibility than in a system producing material goods.

Because of the peculiar and important task of the school manager, he or she must be particularly sensitive to and skilled in the application of mental health and positive climate promoting principles than managers of other systems, or understand how to fully utilize the knowledge and skill of mental health support staff, such as social workers and psychologists, to achieve such ends. The school manager must understand how to promote consensus, a sense of mission, a sense of belonging, trust, respect and a sense of program ownership among all the members in the system through the various governance and management structures and processes he or she creates and maintains.

Countless amounts of money, time and energy go into teacher pre-service and in-service development programs. Much money is spent on the development of support staff in schools. Much money, time and energy is spent on curriculum and materials development. Yet a poorly functioning principal and school can seriously undermine the effectiveness of all other personnel and programs. In many schools across the nation research findings, model program insights and useful material cannot be adequately and beneficially utilized because of management and system functioning problems.

Most troublesome of all, because of the very nature of systems, too often the least effective managers are assigned to a school serving a disproportionate number of youngsters from families and neighborhood systems that are underachieving and/or dysfunctional from the standpoint of preparing their children for school and later job or career, family and citizenship success. It is developmental double jeopardy and often leads to a downhill or underachieving life course with serious consequences for <u>everyone</u> in society.

I have no objection to the level of education research in this country, though I strenuously quarrel with our overemphasis and greater appreciation of experimental research design over case study and ecological research design. I have no quarrel with the idea of compensatory education programs. Again, such programs have been far more successful than the public is willing to acknowledge. I have no quarrel with the new emphasis on teaching staff development and accountability. But all of it is for naught if school management remains an underdeveloped area. Gains made by students in Head Start and other preschool programs "wash out" in time, in part, because youngsters are attending poorly managed and functioning schools.

The single most effective thing that our nation can do to improve the quality of education in general, especially that of poor and minority children--other than improving the economy and quality of life in our entire society--is to give highest priority to the training and development of the people responsible for managing each school building.

Summary

There has been dramatic scientific and technological change in our society since the beginning of the 20th century. This has resulted in numerous social changes. Most relevant to this discussion is that the school is no longer a natural part of the community with a neighborhood, parent, administrator, teacher, student more-or-less consensus about goals, strategies and methods. Such a consensus must be systematically created in the modern school. But schools are generally still organized as they were in the past, with full responsibility for management in the hands of a single person, a principal. And principal or school management development has not been adequately emphasized in education. Recent research suggests that management is the key ingredient needed for school success. The two models cited above, and other work, suggest that a collaborative management approach is most appropriate in the modern school.